

THE  
EXECUTION  
OF  
William Howard,  
Late  
Lord Viscount Stafford;

*Who was beheaded on Wednesday the 29 of this instant Decemb<sup>r</sup>. 1680. upon the Scaffold on Tower-Hill, For HIGH TREASON, in Conspiring the Death of the King, and the Massacring all the Protestants in England, Scotland and Ireland, and to introduce Popery.*

*With an Account of his Sentence; the Attenuer of his Behaviour, and being Beheaded; and of many Passages during the Action.*

**I**T hath been observed in all Ages, that such gross Impieties as Treason and Murders have seldom escap'd unpunish'd: for did not the Laws of Man render them Capital and Notorious Crimes of the deepest Dy and ugliest Form? Yet the Powerful Arm of Divine Justice will not let them rest in Quiet. But as it did by Cain and Judas, haunt them with perpetual Horror to their Grave.

But here Justice and the Laws of the Nation have detected those Blood-thirsty men, who thought Three ample Kingdoms scarce a Sacrifice sufficient for their great IDOL the incestuous POPE. But after Sixteen years Toil in Mischief, and the Expence of many Millions, He that sitteth in Heaven, laugheth them to Scorn, and in a Moment maris their mighty Stratagems and Works that they had fail'd to batter down this Nation's Peace; nay by turning their Wisdom into Foolishness, made themselves the Cause of discovering their Machivillian Policies, as to instance the Death of Sir Edm. Godfrey, whom they murdered, for no other end, than to stifle the Noise that was rumour'd of the PLOT, and that *celebrat* confession to him might be forgot. But his Murder, like a Voice from Heaven

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proclaimed it throughout the 3 Kingdoms, and begat a Belief in them, that before would not so much as hear of a PLOT.

But the particulars of this Subject, upon the 5 King-Leaders; viz. *Stafford, Bellasis, Powis, Arundel and Peters*, these were impeached by the House of Commons, and committed in *Octob. 1678.* where they have continued: Continuing to use all possible Means either to bring their Hellish Design to pass, or to perswade people, there was no such thing as a PLOT: and that 'tis only a Device of the Evidence to advance themselves.

But in vain have they so suggested to themselves, for none else will give Credit to their smooth, tho fallacious Pretences, yet notwithstanding all these Shifts and subtle Endeavours, Justice at last has Legal hold of some of them, and his Follower Death has layd *Stafford* in Silence; nor could his Wiles preserve him, for on the *of Novemb. 1678.* according to the Time, The Lords and Commons had mutually agreed: hereupon he was brought to the Barr of the Court of Justice in *Westminster-hall*; the Tower-Ax was carryed before him: where after the PLOT was proved in general: The Evidence proceeded upon particulars: And positively swore, That he had actually endeavoured to hire them for large Sums of Money to Murder the King: that being effected, to make a Massacree, and bring in a Forein Power for the Subduing these Kingdoms to the See of *Rome*, and utterly extirpating the Protestant Religion: Against which he made a weak Defence; And brought a Cloud of Witnesses to disprove the times and Places of such Treacherous Consults. But they often confounded themselves in the Delivery of their Testimonies, and upon any Cross-Questions asked them, started quite out of the former Tract of discourse, and were at a Non-plus: so is it with those who are only guided by what those that they witness for has inform'd them, not knowing how to proceed further than the Particulars that have bin told them. Yet notwithstanding the long Delays he made to put off his Tryal to further time: The continuance whereof was Eight Days in all: He at last was found Guilty of the Treasons for which he was Indicted: Whereupon he desired an *Arrest of Judgment*, but could by no means obtain it, by reason he had not the least pretence of Law to fix the same upon: So that he receiv'd Sentence from the Lord High Steward, as it was agreed upon by the Lords Assembled in Parliament:

To go the Place from whence he came, and from thence to go the place appointed for Execution, drawn upon an Hurdle, where he must be hang'd up by the Neck, but not till he was dead, then to be cut down alive, his Privy Members cut off, and Bowels rip'd out, and to be burnt before his Face: his Head to be cut off, his Quarters to be disposed of at the Pleasure of the King.

This was the Sentence, and the Law allows no other to such as are attainted for that Capital Crime of High Treason: but as he



was a Peer, the Lord high Steward informed him, That their Lordships had so far taken it into Consideration, as to make it their Humble Request to the King, that the greatest part of this Sentence be Remitted, and that he only loose his Head : After this he was Remanded to the *Tower*, the Ax being carried before him, where he continued very pensive, and had several come to visit him, amongst which (no doubt) there were many subtle Jesuites, and Popish Priests in disguise to confirm this Blind Superstition, least he should be smitten with Remorse, for the horrid Crimes which he was Guilty of and so make some Confession of his wicked Intents, after he had continued in the *Tower*: the Warrant being signed for his Execution, he was on *Wednesday* the 29 of this instant *December*, brought forth, attended with a strong Guard, all the Hamlets making a Lane on each side : He passed on to the Scaffold prepared for that purpose. Where being come, he was helped up; then with heavy Cheer, he cast his Eyes about, seeming much dejected and full of Sorrow for the Sins he had Committed; many of his Friends flockt about the Scaffold, as near as it was permitted them. Much bewailing his sad End, the which when he beheld he could not refrain Weeping to bear them Company, often lifting up his Hands and repeating Prayers to himself, first turning one way and then another to view as is supposed whom he knew there present, which he continued doing for a good space, speaking with a doleful Voice, as seeming very loth to dye, as now perhaps having some mistrust of the Popes Infalibility, and fearing if he should get him into Purgatory, he would not be able to fetch him out again.

But to draw to a Conclusion, after he had been upon the Scaffold for near an hour, the Headsman asking him forgiveness, as is usual in that Case: he Kneeled down to the Block to receive the reward of his Treason; where, repeating some Prayers (as many affirm, in *Latin*;) after some delay, gave the Signal of his being ready, by stretching out his Arms or the like: whereupon the Heads-man at one full blow Severed his Head from his Body, which seemed to stir for some time; after which, both it and the Body were conveyed back, to be disposed of according to his Majestyes pleasure. Thus fell the Traytor that sought the downfal of three Kingdoms, and to dye the Bosom of the Earth with Native Blood; so may all the rest of that Internal Crue, (who to please an old Avaritious Monk or Fryer, will Murder their Prince, and destroy all that dare to own the Holy Gospel) fall and receive the just rewards of their fowl Treasons: whilst we being defended by Heaven, in their despite live peaceably and happy, &c.

The Scaffold whereon he was Executed, was built two days before the Execution, being four-square, and about six or seven foot high from the ground; and between eleven and twelve foot over: place

placed on the West-side of the Hill, near to the Trees, his fear of Death, proclaimed a Guilt in him, and shewed the small Stomach he had to receive the Crown of Martyrdom promised him by the Pope, his Speeches were but few and those could not be distinctly heard, no not by those that stood next to him, his Voyce being hoarse and low, the which was drowned with the noise and clammour of the People, who came flocking there by thousands, all the Windows round the Hill being filled, and the Tower Bartel-ments seemed to be piled with People: so desirous were they to behold his long expected Execution done. After his Head was severed from his Body the which was performed at one smart Blow, the Trunk containing Cordial Life gave two or three rebounds, whilst the Gasping Head by the Mouths opening and shutting seemed willing now in Deaths Convulsions to Preclaim the Plot: overflowing the Scaffold with his Blood, who would have made the Nation an *Alcadema*, or Field of Blood. After he was thus Executed, his Head and Body with his Cloaths were wrapped up in a Cloth, and conveyed into the Tower, where since we hear that his Catholick Friends have purchased them of the Executioner, to be kept as Relicks of his Saintship. He dyed obstinately in the Catholick Religion with his Beads and Crucifix about him, and was saying an *Ave Mary*, when the dreadful Axe slept in, and said AMEN: by this first grand Example, the Plotting Papists may see, that Justice is not afraid to strike at the Root of their Conspiracies and Home-Treasons, though she a while delayed the Angry stroke.

It is Reported, That the other four Popish Lords yet remaining in the Tower, from a Window beheld their Brother Conspirator fall. Many of his Friends were with him on the Scaffold, and 'tisto be feared some Jesuites, in Masquerode, to keep him steadfast to his Principles, for fear he should have obliterated their future hopes by making a Confession of his Treasons.

## F I N I S.

